

Mustafa Rumi (q.v.) in about 1905. There were also conversions of individuals at around this time in Japan and China. Among those who became Bahá'ís were Daiun Inouye, who had been a Buddhist monk, and who translated Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era into Japanese; Beatrice Lane Suzuki, the wife of the prominent Buddhist scholar Daisetsu Suzuki; and Bernard Leach (q.v.), the English potter who played an important role in the communication of Eastern (Japanese Buddhist) art to the West. The numbers of Bahá'ís from Buddhist background did not then increase significantly until the 1960s and 1970s when there were large-scale conversions in Southeast Asia, particularly in Vietnam, where some 100,000 people became Bahá'ís. A number of Buddhist monks have become Bahá'ís. This expansion was halted by the political upheavals in this area but has recently shown some signs of resuming.

1. Moral and ethical teachings

If we confine ourselves to the area of moral and ethical teachings, there are great similarities between the Buddhist and Bahá'í teachings.

a. Suffering (dukkha). Both the Buddha and Bahá'u'lláh see the suffering of humankind and their wish is to lead humanity out of this suffering. This is a primary focus of their teachings. The Buddha says that the house of self is on fire, burning with hatred, lust, and illusion. Humanity is like a man suffering from a poisoned arrow in his foot, which must be removed or it will destroy him (see 2 below). The Buddha is the physician who is able to pull this arrow out (MN 1, 428:34 - 429:28; sutta 63; tr. Warren 120). Bahá'u'lláh uses a similar analogy regarding human beings. "So fierce is this fire of self burning within them, that at every moment they seem to be afflicted with fresh torments" (KI 77). He states that humankind is ill and is suffering, but he, the healer, the divine physician "perceiveth the disease, and prescribeth, in His unerring wisdom, the remedy" (GWB 106:213). (See "Theodicy.")

b. Four Noble Truths. The Buddha, in the first sermon that he gave after his enlightenment, identifies both the problem of humanity and its cure. These are called the Four Noble Truths, and the same statements may be found in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh. The first Noble Truth is that every part of our life (birth, old age, disease, death) is conditioned by change leading to suffering and sorrow. Similarly, in the Bahá'í writings, it is stated: "These brief few days shall pass away, this present life shall vanish from our sight; the roses of this world shall be fresh and fair no more, the garden of this earth's triumphs and delights shall droop and fade. The spring season of life shall turn into the autumn of death, the bright joy of palace halls shall give way to moonless dark within the tomb" (SWA 188:220-221).

The second Noble Truth is that the cause of this sorrow is our attachment to (or thirst, or craving for) this world. The Bahá'í teachings agree: "If we suffer it is the outcome of material things, and all the trials and troubles come from this world of illusion" (PT 110; GWB 153:327). According to Buddhist teaching, this suffering rests upon a circular chain of causation (paticca-samuppda), and we are bound to this chain by ignorance. `Abdu'l-Bahá

writes: "Such is this mortal abode: a storehouse of afflictions and suffering. It is ignorance that binds man to it, for no comfort can be secured by any soul in this world, from monarch down to the most humble commoner. If once this life should offer a man a sweet cup, a hundred bitter ones will follow; such is the condition of this world (SWA 170:200).

The third Noble Truth concerns the end of suffering; it is the putting to an end ignorant craving, giving up desire and attachment, abandoning pleasure-seeking and craving for life or for the cessation of life. Bahá'u'lláh also calls on human beings to detach themselves from the things of this world. "Disencumber yourselves of all attachment to this world and the vanities thereof. Beware that ye approach them not, inasmuch as they prompt you to walk after your own lusts and covetous desires, and hinder you from entering the straight and glorious Path" (GWB 128:276; SCKA 15; HWP 40).

The Path (dhamma) referred to here has also been mentioned by the Buddha as the fourth Noble Truth. This path, the Eight-fold Noble Path, is called by the Buddha the "Middle Way," the way of moderation that avoids extremes. Bahá'u'lláh also praises the path of moderation. "In all matters moderation is desirable. If a thing is carried to excess, it will prove a source of evil" (TB 69).

c. The Eight-fold Noble Path. The Path which we as human beings must follow if we are to escape from the suffering of this world is called by the Buddha the Eight-fold Noble Path. This sums up the Buddha's fundamental teachings on knowledge, morals, and meditation. Space does not allow a full exposition of this theme here so it must suffice briefly to list these and refer to a relevant passage in the Bahá'í scriptures that demonstrates that Bahá'í teachings uphold all eight of the elements of this path: right view (TB 10:157); right aim (SDC 98); right speech (KI 193); right action (HWP 76, TB 10:156); right living (HWP 82); right effort (GWB 34:81, 151:321); right mindfulness (GWB 60:118, HWP 44); and right contemplation (PT 174-6). (For a fuller examination of this theme, see Momen, *Buddhism and the Bahá'í Faith*.)

2. Metaphysical teachings

When we come to metaphysical teachings, there are more problems in correlating the Buddhist and Bahá'í viewpoints, mainly caused by the differences between ancient South Asian and nineteenth-century West Asian thought and terminology. Yet even here some similarities can be discerned. When the Buddha was asked about metaphysics, he refused to be drawn into theorizing about it. No statements about such questions can adequately convey the reality. For example, the Buddha says of the one who has achieved the goal of nirvana that "there is no means of knowing him . . . That by which one could define him, that is not for him. When all phenomena (dhamma) are removed, then all means of description are also removed" (Sutta-Nipata 1076). Therefore the Buddha discouraged his followers from concentrating on such matters and relegated them to the realm of the *avyakatas*, the inexpressibles.

On one occasion, Malunkyaputta asked the Buddha a number of questions: whether

or not the world is eternal; whether the world is finite or infinite; whether or not the soul and the body are identical; and about the existence of the saint after death. He received no direct reply. Instead the Buddha related a parable: "It is as if a man is hit by a poison arrow. His friends hasten to the doctor. The latter is about to draw the arrow out of the wound. The wounded man however cries: `Stop, I will not have the arrow drawn out until I know who shot it. Whether a warrior or a Brahmin, or belonging to the agricultural or menial castes . . . his name and to which family he belonged . . . of what species and description the arrow is.'" In seeking to attain absolute knowledge of all of the circumstances of the shooting, the man neglected the practical matter of removing the arrow and would certainly die. Similarly, the Buddha asserts that were he to try to elucidate the answer to the questions that Malunkyaputta had put to him, "that person would die before the Tathagata had ever elucidated this to him" (MN [1:426] 2:2:63, v. 43; tr. Horner 2:99; Warren 120).

To each of the above questions that the Buddha considered among the inexpressibles, Bahá'u'lláh gives what is basically a similar answer. As to whether the world is eternal or not, Bahá'u'lláh states: "As regards thine assertions about the beginning of creation, this is a matter on which conceptions vary by reason of the divergences in men's thoughts and opinions. Wert thou to assert that it hath ever existed and shall continue to exist, it would be true; or wert thou to affirm the same concept as is mentioned in the sacred Scriptures [i.e. that the world had a beginning and will have an end], no doubt would there be about it" (TB 9:140). Regarding the second of Malunkyaputta's questions, whether or not the world is infinite, Bahá'u'lláh again asserts that the truth of this matter is difficult to explain because it is a relative truth: "know thou that the comprehension of this matter dependeth upon the observer himself. In one sense, it is limited; in another, it is exalted beyond all limitations" (GWB 82:162).

Regarding Malunkyaputta's question about the nature of the self or soul, Bahá'u'lláh writes: "Know, verily, that the soul is a sign . . . whose reality the most learned of men hath failed to grasp, and whose mystery no mind, however acute, can ever hope to unravel" (GWB 81:158-9).

Although Bahá'u'lláh uses terms--such as "God"--derived from Judaeo-Christian-Islamic theology, in fact, Bahá'u'lláh, like the Buddha, discourages his followers from spending too much time trying to understand these matters for, he states, they will never be understood in any absolute sense (see 2.c, below) Both the Buddha and Bahá'u'lláh are agreed that all descriptions and attempts to explain this reality are true only in a relative sense and it is possible even for contradictory statements to be true (see, for example, the famous story told by the Buddha of the blind men touching an elephant and their different and contradictory descriptions of it, Udana 6:62ff).

Having established that absolute knowledge of such matters is impossible to attain, the Bahá'í position is that the various understandings of these matters in the different religious systems of the world are all aspects of the

truth. Each religious system provides an understanding from its own viewpoint and each understanding is correct from its own perspective, even though it may appear to be radically different from others. It is therefore not surprising to find in the Bahá'í scriptures passages that are parallel to Buddhist metaphysical conceptions. These Bahá'í concepts are often couched in terms that are alien to Buddhism--the terms of Judaeo-Christian-Muslim theology, which was, after all, the only language available to Bahá'u'lláh with which to communicate with those around him. These terms are only the result of the limitations of the contingent world (samsra) in trying to describe the Absolute. If one looks beyond the terms themselves to the concepts that they are conveying, one can find strong correspondences between many central Buddhist ideas and concepts in the Bahá'í scriptures:

a. The Impermanence of this World (Anicca). Bahá'u'lláh, like the Buddha, (DN 2:42 tr. Davids, Suttas 289) states: ". . . when they recognize its [the world's] fleetingness and are persuaded of its transience. The chances that overtake it, and the changes to which all things pertaining unto it are continually subjected, attest its impermanence" (PM 70:116).

b. The Illusory Nature of this World (Maya). "The world is but a show, vain and empty, a mere nothing, bearing the semblance of reality. Set not your affections upon it . . . Verily I say, the world is like the vapor in a desert, which the thirsty dreameth to be water and striveth after it with all his might, until when he cometh unto it, he findeth it to be mere illusion" (GWB 153:327; cf BWF 386; SWA 177-8). Since the world is ever-changing, impermanent, and illusory, we are instructed both by the Buddha (DN 2:39; tr. Davids, Suttas 288) and Bahá'u'lláh (HWP 14) to attach no importance to it.

c. The Absolute. The Buddhas have assured us that behind this impermanent world and its illusion, there is a reality, the Absolute Reality. Because of this, it is possible for us to escape from the sorrow caused by the chances and changes of this world. Gautama Buddha speaks of the Supramundane (lokuttara, lokottara) or Unconditioned (asankhata, asamskrita). Being beyond this world, we have no adequate words to speak of the Absolute. The following is the Buddha's description of it in the famous Udana passage in the Khuddaka Nikaya: "There is, O monks, an Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unformed. Were there not, O monks, this Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unformed, there would be no escape from the world of the born, originated, created, formed. Since, O monks, there is an Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unformed, therefore is there an escape from the born, originated, created, formed. What is dependant, that also moves; what is independent does not move" (Udana 8:3). Nagarjuna, the founder of the Madhyamika school of Buddhism, argues from this passage that without the acceptance of an Ultimate Reality (Paramartha) there can be no deliverance (nirvana) (Madhyamika Karikas, cited in Murti 235).

Bahá'u'lláh similarly speaks of an entity, an Unknowable Essence, of which nothing can be predicated: "To every discerning and illumined heart it is evident that God, the unknowable Essence, the divine Being, is immensely exalted beyond every human attribute, such as corporeal existence, ascent and

descent, egress and regress . . . He standeth exalted beyond and above all separation and union, all proximity and remoteness. No sign can indicate His presence or His absence" (KI 98). Such passages in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh correlate strongly with the writings of Nagarjuna where he argues for the emptiness of all dogmatic positions (shunyata of drishti, see Murti 140-142).

Also fruitful for a further consideration of the relationship between the Bahá'í scriptures and Buddhism are certain concepts developed in the Mahayana schools, such as the concept of jiriki (own power) and tariki (other power) in Pure Land Buddhism.

d. The Nature of Buddhahood. In summarizing the above section, we may say that Bahá'u'lláh's teachings agree with the Buddha's in stating that it is impossible for humanity to obtain a comprehensive knowledge of the Absolute Reality. It is also not spiritually profitable to spend a great deal of time in thinking about these matters. Even contemplating the nature of the Buddhas is not profitable (SN 3:118; tr. Conze 106). Instead we should look to the Buddhas, who are the only source of our knowledge of the Absolute, and try to follow their teachings.

The Buddhas are in reality denizens of a higher plane who are temporarily in this world in order to guide us (DN 13:1:42-3; tr. Davids, Suttas 186). When asked about the way to attain a state of union with Brahma, Gautama Buddha replied: "Know, Vasettha, that (from time to time) a Tathagata is born into the world, a fully Enlightened One, blessed and worthy, abounding in wisdom and goodness, happy, with knowledge of the world, unsurpassed as a guide to erring mortals, a teacher of gods and men, a Blessed Buddha. He, by himself, thoroughly understands, and sees, as it were, face to face this universe--the world below with all its spirits, and the worlds above, of Mara and of Brahma--and all creatures, Samanas and Brahmins, gods and men, and he makes this knowledge known to others. The truth doth he proclaim both in its letter and in its spirit, lovely in its origin, lovely in its progress, lovely in its consummation: the higher life doth he make known, in all its purity and in all its perfectness" (DN 13:1:44; tr. Davids, Suttas 186-7). Bahá'u'lláh expresses these same ideas in his writings when he says that the Manifestations of God (Tathagatas) are the intermediaries between the highest reality and this world (see "Manifestation of God"). They are thoroughly familiar with the highest reality and can show us the path to that world.

Although the Buddha is one who has attained nirvana, it is not true that anyone who reaches nirvana is automatically a Buddha. The statements of the Buddha indicate that while there are many who will reach nirvana (thus, for example, on his deathbed, the Buddha assured all five hundred of his companions that they were stream-winners, i.e. would reach Nirvana, DN 2:154, 16:6:6; tr. Davids, Dialogues 2:173), fully-enlightened Buddhas who are Tathagatas and who renew the dhamma and bring new teachings for the vinaya come but seldom: "Rarely do Tathagatas arise in the world, they who are Arahants, fully-enlightened ones" (DN [2:148] 16:5:24; tr. Davids, Dialogues 2:164; cf

Dhammapada 182). Indeed, the Buddha specifically states that his station is one "which no worldling can attain" (Dhammapada 272) and is unknowable: "Since a Tathagata, even when actually present, is incomprehensible, it is inept to say of him--the Uttermost Person, the Supernal Person, the Attainer of the Supernal" (SN 3:118; tr. Conze 106). Since the Tathagata or Buddha "knows the straight path that leads to union with Brahma" (DN 1:43; tr. Davids, Suttas 186), his function is to "show the way" (MN 3:107; tr. Chalmers 158; Horner 31:56).

The Buddha is to be distinguished from others who are freed by insight because he also brings into being a new dhamma: "The Tathagata, brethren, who, being Arahata, is fully enlightened, he it is who doth cause a way to arise which had not arisen before . . . That, brethren, is the distinction, the specific feature which distinguishes the Tathagata who, being Arahata, is fully enlightened, from the brother who is freed by insight" (SN [3:60] 22:58; tr. Davids and Woodward 3:58). The station of a Buddha is thus very exalted and a phenomenon that occurs but rarely in the world. Gautama Buddha names but three previous Buddhas as well as Maitreya (Mettaya) Buddha who is to come.

Broadly speaking the station and function of the fully-enlightened ones is described very similarly by Bahá'u'lláh. He also states that such figures arise but rarely, some five hundred to one thousand years usually separating each from the next. Their station is very exalted, far above that of any human being, and their function is to guide humanity into the true path, to re-establish the dhamma, and to give new rules for humanity's social relations (see "Manifestation of God").

The Buddha in the quotation cited above states that the Tathagata is one who brings into being a new dhamma, one which has not arisen before, and yet elsewhere the Buddha states that the dhamma that he brings is an ancient dhamma, preached by previous Buddhas (SN 2:104). This apparent contradiction is fully in accord with Bahá'u'lláh's teaching on progressive revelation (q.v.) Stated in Buddhist terms, this teaching holds that the dhamma has two parts. The first part is the spiritual and ethical teachings which are preached by every Buddha and do not change from one age to another. They are the ancient dhamma preached by the Buddhas of old. The second part of the dhamma is the social teachings which are designed to set up a society in which the spiritual and ethical teachings can best be put into effect. Since humanity's social condition is constantly changing and evolving, this part of the dhamma changes from one Buddha to the next. The Buddha left his disciples the rules of the Sangha, the Vinaya, as the best way for spiritual progress. Bahá'ís believe that Bahá'u'lláh has brought new social principles and social structures in accordance with the needs of this age.

Both the Bahá'í and Buddhist scriptures agree that there is thus a line of Buddhas who have each come to the world one after the other with an interval of hundreds or thousands of years between them. Gautama Buddha states: "I am not the first Buddha who came upon the earth nor shall I be the last" (DN 3:76).

e. The Soul or Self. The Buddhist teaching of Anatta (no self) is perhaps the most difficult to reconcile with Bahá'í teaching (see "Soul, Spirit and Mind"). There are clear differences but also some similarities. We have seen that the Buddha regarded the existence of the self or soul as one of the inexpressibles. Any statement about it--even to say either that it exists or it does not exist--would be to take a dogmatic position and this would not be in accordance with the reality of the situation. Reality is transcendent to thought and conceptualizations.

The soul or self is also regarded as a relative or contingent existence and not an absolute reality in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh (GWB 81:157; PM 58:91). The Bahá'í writings are full of statements about the nothingness of self. For example, in writing of one aspect of the station of the Manifestation (Buddhahood), Bahá'u'lláh states that they, the Manifestations (Buddhas) of every age, when comparing themselves to the Absolute "have considered themselves as utterly effaced and non-existent . . . they have regarded themselves as utter nothingness, and deemed their mention in that Court an act of blasphemy. For the slightest whisperings of self, within such a Court, is an evidence of self-assertion and independent existence. In the eyes of them who have attained unto that Court, such a suggestion is itself a grievous transgression" (KI 180). In considering the stages of the human being's journey to his ultimate goal, Bahá'u'lláh names the last of these stages "The Valley of True Poverty and Absolute Nothingness." Put into Buddhist terms, this passage states that in order for human beings to achieve their ultimate goal of the Absolute (Nirvana), they must die to their self and extinguish all attachments to this world of Samsara (SV 36).

f. Nirvana (Nibbana). The Buddha frequently denied that his teachings were nihilistic. This particularly refers to the teaching of nirvana. Although nirvana means cessation, this does not refer to annihilation. It refers to the cessation of ignorance, of sorrow, of cravings. Since the state itself is indescribable, no definitive description of the state itself can be given. "No measure measures him who enters rest. There is no word with which to speak of him. All thought is here at an end and so therefore all paths that words can take are also closed" (Sutta Nipata 5:1:6). But it is clear from the statements of the Buddha that this state is one which is achievable "here and now," during this lifetime. "Those whose mind is well trained in the path of enlightenment, who cling not to anything and find joy in this freedom from attachment, whose passions have been overcome and who shine with a pure light, these shall attain Nirvana even in this mortal life" (Dhammapada 87-9; cf Khuddaka Nikaya, Iti Vuttaka 38ff).

Bahá'u'lláh similarly urges human beings to be free from attachments (HWP 55). If they succeed, Bahá'u'lláh's description of the goal of our endeavor is full of echoes of the Buddhist descriptions of Nirvana: "Pleasant is the realm of being, wert thou to attain thereto; glorious is the domain of eternity, shouldst thou pass beyond the world of mortality; sweet is the holy ecstasy if thou drinkest of the mystic chalice from the hands of the celestial

Youth. Shouldst thou attain this station, thou wouldst be freed from destruction and death, from toil and sin" (HWP 70). If they achieve this state of detachment, this state of the cessation of craving, they have entered the spiritual kingdom (nirvana) in which suffering (dukkha) does not affect them. "The ills all flesh is heir to do not pass him by, but they only touch the surface of his life, the depths are calm and serene" (PT 110).

The main task of a dhamma is to show human beings how to achieve Nirvana. The religions of the world have emphasized two main pathways to salvation or liberation. The first of these is faith. There are some elements of such an approach to Nirvana in the Pure Land sects of Mahayana Buddhism, in which attainment to Nirvana depends upon faith in the saving power of Amida Buddha. The second pathway to salvation or liberation is that of deeds and effort. This is the pathway emphasized in Theravada Buddhism. The Bahá'í teachings also stress the importance of one's individual efforts to achieve one's own salvation or liberation. In fact in the Bahá'í Faith both of these pathways are considered important for the achievement of salvation or liberation.

Although Theravada Buddhism has been advocated as a religion of reason and systematic practical procedures, there is evidence from the books of the Tripitaka that the early Buddhist community also attached importance to faith and devotion in initiating and developing the religious life. Faith (saddha) is referred to as the seed of all wholesome states, ready to grow (SN 1:171). On many occasions, individuals are described thus: "having heard the Buddha's teachings, he acquired faith in the Tathagata" (MN 1:179, 276,344; 3:33). Faith is also described as being the essential step in the going forth from home into homelessness; that is, the adopting of the monastic life, joining the Sangha (MN 1:123, 161, 192; 3:238. SN 1:120).

It is even indicated that in some cases the Buddha infused the mind of some of his followers with faith. Raja the Malla had met the Buddha but evinced no interest in his teachings until the Buddha infuses Raja's mind with love and he acquires faith in the Buddha (Vinaya Pitaka 6:247). The concept that the conditions for faith provided by the Buddha through what could be considered to be a gracious activity is also found in the Bahá'í texts in connection with Bahá'u'lláh (KI 236; SAQ 32:130).

The Buddha urges however a critical and rational faith (akaravati saddha) not a blind groundless faith (amulika saddha). Such a critical faith is considered by the Buddha to be grounded in awareness and understanding (MN 1:320). In the Bahá'í writings also, faith is not blind faith; rather it is described as "discerning faith" and linked to knowledge and understanding (BWF 364); faith is defined as "conscious knowledge" (BWF 383).

g. Rebirth. The concept of rebirth was developed by Buddhists from the earlier Hindu concepts of reincarnation. However, since in Buddhism there is the concept of anatta (no self), it is not the self of a person that returns, but the collection of the five khandhas (skandhas), the predispositions and characteristics of an individual. It could be argued that this concept is not

very different from the Bahá'í concept that in every age there occurs the return of certain individuals from previous ages--not in the sense that there is a return of the self-same person, but that there is the return of the personality characteristics of such a person. A parallel is drawn in the Bahá'í scriptures with the return of the rose each season with the same characteristics as the rose of the previous season (KI 159, SAQ 81:282-9; see "Return").

This is most clearly shown in the life-histories of the Buddhas themselves. Thus, for example, whenever a Buddha, a supremely enlightened one, arises, there are certain personality types who immediately respond and become his disciples while others oppose him and try to limit his influence and even harm him. These personality types, these collections of particular skandhas, are called in the Bahá'í writings the "returns" of the same personality type of a previous age. Thus we are told in the Jataka Tales that in former ages, in the previous incarnations of Gautama Buddha, Devadatta had tried to harm him then also (Jataka 3:370-73, no. 407; tr. Conze 85). So, for example, Azal (q.v.), who opposed and betrayed Bahá'u'lláh, can be regarded as the return of Judas Iscariot, who was a disciple of Jesus Christ and betrayed him, and can in turn be regarded as a return of Devadatta, who betrayed the Buddha. Similarly, the companions of Bahá'u'lláh who accompanied him in the stages of his exiles can be regarded as the return of the twelve disciples of Christ who in turn are the return of the those monks who gathered around Gautama Buddha.

3. Buddhist prophecies

Bahá'ís consider that Bahá'u'lláh is the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Buddha that in due time another Buddha would come to the world, the Mettaya (Maitreya) Buddha: "In due time, O monks, there will arise in the world an Exalted One named Mettaya, an arahat, fully awakened, full of wisdom and a perfect guide, himself having trodden the path to the very end, with knowledge of the worlds, unsurpassed as an educator, teacher of gods and men, an exalted Buddha, just as in the present period I am now . . . And he will proclaim the teaching that is lovely in its origin, lovely in its progress, and lovely in its consummation . . . He will be the head of an order of many thousand of monks, just as in the present period I am the head of an order of many hundreds" (DN, Mahaparinibbana-Suttana 3:76). Shoghi Effendi specifically identifies Bahá'u'lláh with the Maitreya Buddha (GPB 95) and as the fifth Buddha (GPB 94).

In Mahayana sources there are many more prophecies relating to the Maitreya Buddha. One of these is that found in the Mahasannipata sutra (Ta-tsi-king, see Cowell et al. 115-6n), in which it is prophesied that the Maitreya Buddha would come after five epochs of five hundred years each from the time of Gautama Buddha. This period of 2,500 years was completed in 1956 C.E. according to the traditional Buddhist calendar. Also of importance from the Bahá'í viewpoint is the name of the Mahayana savior figure Amitabha, who is considered to preside over a Pure Land (Sukhavati) to the west of India. Bahá'ís point out the similarity between this name (which may be translated as Light of the

Infinite) and that of Bahá'u'lláh (which may be translated as Glory or Light of God), who came from a land to the west of India. There is also a parallel between the repetition of the name of Amitabha in many Buddhist Pure Land sects, and the repetition of the Greatest Name (q.v.) in Bahá'í prayer (see "Prayer.4.b").

To detail fully the Bahá'í interpretation of how the various Buddhist prophecies indicate the coming of Bahá'u'lláh is impossible in an article of this nature. In brief, it may be stated that the Buddhist prophecy that the Maitreya Buddha will inaugurate an era of universal peace and tranquillity is regarded by Bahá'ís as having been fulfilled by Bahá'u'lláh's advent and teachings on world peace.

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Abbreviations of Buddhist texts used in the article are: MN - Majjhima-nikaya; DN - Digha-nikaya; SN - Samyutta-nikaya. Books and translations referred to in the article are: Lord Chalmers (tr.), *Further Dialogues of the Buddha*, Sacred Books of the Buddhists, 2 vols., London, 1926-7. Edward Conze (ed.), *Buddhist Texts: through the ages*, Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1954. T.W. Rhys Davids (tr.), *Buddhist Suttas*, Sacred Books of the East, vol. 11. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1881. T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davids (tr.), *Dialogues of the Buddha*, 3 vols., Sacred Books of the Buddhists, vol. 2-4, London: Henry Frowde (vols. 1 and 2) and Humphrey Milford (vol. 3), 1899-1921. C.A.F. Rhys Davids and F.L. Woodward (tr.), *Book of Kindred Sayings* London: Pali Text Society, 1917-30. The *Dhammapada* (tr. Juan Mascaro), Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973. I.B. Horner (tr.), *The Collection of Middle Length Sayings*, 3 vols. London: Luzacs for Pali Text Society, 1954-59. Henry C. Warren, *Buddhism in Translation*, Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 3, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1896. E.B. Cowell, F. Max Muller and J. Takakusu (tr.), *Buddhist Mahayana Sutras*, Sacred Books of the East, vol. 49. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894. T.R.V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, London: Mandala, 1980.

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